Arizona Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, October 26, 2005, 10:00 am
Pueblo Grande Museum

Attendees (taken from sign-in sheets):

Dave Strayer – Casa Grande Fire Department
Ron Klein – Yavapai County Sheriff's Office
Andy Miller – Arizona Department of Public Safety
LeRoy Johnson – Mesa Fire Department
Fred Christley – Arizona Game and Fish
Karl Hartmetz – La Paz County Sheriff's Office
Chris Nadeau – Goodyear Police Department
Curt Knight – PSCC, Arizona Department of Public Safety
Kevin Rogers – PSCC, Arizona Department of Public Safety
Wayne Kincheloe – PSCC, Arizona Department of Public Safety
Mike Burns – Phoenix Fire Department
Cy Otsuka – Glendale Police Department
Paul Wilson – Pima County Sheriff's Office
Larry Sayers – Pima County Radio Communications
Mark Venuti – Guardian Medical Transport
John Maldonado – Phoenix Fire Department
Steve Gibbs – Maricopa County Sheriff's Office
Jay Vargo – Arizona Division of Emergency Management
Sandra Wagner – Motorola
Huel Benton – ATF
Mary Millard – Maricopa County Sheriff's Office
Jennifer Hagen – Phoenix Police Department
Jesse Cooper – Phoenix Police Department
Cliff Bailey – APS Co.
Linda Vanderbeck – APS Co.
Dale Brown – Arizona State Forestry
Curt Fonger – PCSO
Bob White – Flagstaff Police Department
Cathy Allen – Coconino County Sheriff's Office
Alan Jensen – Tempe Fire Department
Jon Huish – Arizona State Forestry
Stephen Powles – Arizona Department of Public Safety
Steven Golisch – Arizona Department of Public Safety
Gene McGahey – National Law Enforcement & Corrections Technology Center – RM
David Funk – National Law Enforcement & Corrections Technology Center – RM
Tom Tolman – National Law Enforcement & Corrections Technology Center – RM
Kip Greenstreet – Twin Eagle Consulting
Carl Reitz – Arizona Division of Emergency Management
Vicky Scott – Peoria Police Department
James Stoltenberg – Rural Metro Fire Department
Ben Standifer - Tohono O'odham
Kateri Harri – Tohono O'odham
Benny Gomez – Pima County Office of Emergency Management & Homeland Security
Steve Buckley – Gartner Corporation
John Roberts – City of Peoria
Dale Gray – Patriot Towers

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Paul Wilson called the meeting to order at 10:05 am. He welcomed the attendees and asked them to introduce themselves and indicate the agency they represent.

2. Nomination of Voting Members

The SIEC has made nominations of voting members for fire and law enforcement. These members include the co-chairs, John Maldonado and Paul Wilson, as well as Mark Venuti and Scott Tillman. The SIEC is still awaiting a nomination of a representative from the Arizona Office of Homeland Security. Jay Vargo stated he would work to find a nominee to sit on the SIEC voting body and provide a nomination to the SIEC prior to the next meeting. In the interim, the co-chairs asked Mr. Vargo if he would serve as a voting member until a nomination of a representative from his organization is determined.

3. SIEC Operational Work Group Activities

Dan Wells was not present so Curt Knight reported for him. The SIEC Operational Workgroup has met twice to start redrafting the operational procedures and criteria for addressing interoperability needs. At present, they will be using the Arizona Inter-Agency Radio System State Plan dated April 1999.

The workgroup membership is focused to participants in Coconino County; however, membership is not exclusive to individuals within Coconino County. Currently, Coconino County is working on a pilot project for interoperability. Dave Strayer of Casa Grande Fire volunteered to be a co-chair with Dan Wells.

The next Operational Workgroup meeting will be held on November 1, 2005 in Flagstaff.

4. SIEC Standards

Previously, the Commission staff assisted with the development of subscriber standards. A document has been drafted that includes information on standards that should be followed regarding various frequencies. These standards were initially developed to inform the Arizona Office of Homeland Security of guidelines for FY2005 funding requests regarding radios and radio programming. At some point, the document should be approved by the SIEC voting body and distributed to jurisdictions.

VHF Subscriber Equipment

Standards were developed subsequent to a request from regional planners for standards related to VHF subscriber equipment in order to determine whether grant funds were being appropriately requested for communications projects.

Paul Wilson asked for clarification regarding which frequencies were initially allocated for law enforcement use and which were allocated for fire department use. It was noted the 154.2800 frequency was initially allocated for fire use for mutual aid responses. There is currently no plan to build out this frequency, as it would highly impact existing operational procedures.

Paul Wilson asked if there has been any pushback from participants regarding the standards for VHF subscriber equipment that were developed. Curt Knight noted the standards were vetted with communications manufacturers and distributors with no great impact to their business practices.

Paul Wilson made a suggestion the Technical Workgroup review the VHF subscriber equipment standards document and provide input and feedback. The Technical Workgroup should then bring back recommendations to the SIEC.

Curt Knight suggested that the Technical Workgroup consider using separate standards that can stand on their own merit for each frequency type: UHF, VHF, and 800 MHz.

Vicky Scott asked if the Operational Workgroup should also have input on the standards as any standard that is developed and subsequently implemented would likely impact operations.

Paul Wilson moved the letter be brought to the Technical Workgroup for comment and consideration. Mark Venuti seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with affirmative votes from John Maldonado, Jay Vargo, Mark Venuti, and Paul Wilson.

Operational Policies and Procedures

The Commission suggests the existing Arizona Inter-Agency Radio System Plan dated April 1999 be utilized as the operational policies and procedures. Mark Venuti made a motion the SIEC adopt this plan as the operating plan. Paul Wilson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with affirmative votes from John Maldonado, Jay Vargo, Mark Venuti, and Paul Wilson.

5. Activities of Arizona Emergency Radio System (AERS) Deployment – Kevin Rogers, Jay Vargo

The PSCC agreed to provide technical oversight and support to the AERS program. The plan is to expand from 15 currently existing sites to 45 throughout the state. This expansion will allow for interoperability between UHF/VHF and mutual aid radio channels. Coconino County is the pilot site because of heavy involvement in rebuilding the system and the development of a partnership among agencies to create a dispatch center. The current plan is to have the project in place by the end of this year with statewide capability for AERS deployment planned to be in place by the TOPOFF 4 statewide exercise in May 2007. The project initiates policies and procedures for implementing and using the AERS network. It is a near-term, low-cost solution to allow for greater interoperability. Jay Vargo requested that individuals contact him if they have any questions related to the AERS project.

6. Arizona Regional Review Committee (ARRC) Report on 800 MHz Rebanding – Larry Sayers

Larry Sayers provided background information on 800 MHz rebanding. The purpose of rebanding this spectrum is due to interference with commercial wireless users, which are comprised mostly of Nextel users. The FCC has decided the 800 MHz would be rebanded and ESMR users would be separated from public safety agencies to hopefully relieve any destructive interference that has recently been encountered. Rebanding is a high cost project because of requirements for public safety equipment to be either reprogrammed or replaced.

Rebanding will occur in four separate phases, as it is a large undertaking. Arizona is in Phase 4 of the project. International border regions will be the last to be rebanded as there are international treaties that have to be entered prior to any work being accomplished. Border regions are defined as 110 km to each side of the border. Comments have been sent to the FCC from various regions regarding this project. A good resource regarding the 800 MHz rebanding project is www.800ta.org.

A meeting was held with representatives from Nextel and the states of California and Arizona to develop a plan all agencies are comfortable with and can agree on. A tentative plan was established and Nextel further developed the plan with their resources. The states of New Mexico and Texas were invited, but they did not participate.

7. Review Concept of Operations Report (Vision/Mission Statement)

The Commission was asked to bring an overview of the Commission's vision and mission statement. The Gartner Corporation was hired to assist with the development of a concept of operations. It revealed a need to establish viable operational policies and procedures and noted that doing such would help to improve interoperability. The document is a non-technical document that is based on opinion established using feedback from commissioners when interviewed by Gartner Corporation.

At this afternoon's PSCC meeting, formal approval of the Concept of Operations will be sought and all Commissioners will sign the document for solidity. Subsequently, the report will be published on the PSCC website late this week.

8. Update on PSCC General Policies – Curt Knight

Curt Knight provided an update on the General Policies of the Public Safety Communications Advisory Commission. Suggestions of how the SIEC shall be established and voting body makeup have been memorialized in the PSCC General Policies. A vote of Commission members to adopt these policies will be taken at the subsequent PSCC meeting this afternoon.

Curt Knight noted the General Policies structure the SIEC as an open meeting with open meeting law requirements.

Paul Wilson asked if a policy manual has been developed to serve as a reference manual. He suggested documents that speak to the history of the SIEC including the development of the Committee, action plans for workgroups, documents establishing authority should be included. Curt Knight responded one has not been created yet. Curt Knight discussed the potential of including the minutes from the SIEC meeting and various other documents to be posted on the PSCC website.

9. Update on Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Interoperability Plan – Jesse Cooper

The Office of Domestic Preparedness requires a Tactical Interoperability Plan be developed by all existing UASI regions in order to be eligible to receive funding under future grants. Jesse Cooper reported there will be a meeting held with a site manager to begin the development of the operational, technical, and governance portions of the plan.

Jesse Cooper stated he has received feedback from other UASI jurisdictions who have completed the development of their plan and have found the implementation of the plan is the most difficult.

Jesse Cooper noted the UASI plan will be constructed in such a manner that it can be modified to serve as a statewide plan that works in concert with other statewide communications plans being developed and implemented. He intends to include representation from the SIEC workgroups in the development process of the plan.

Paul Wilson asked for clarification on what the UASI region is and what jurisdictions it includes. John Maldonado stated it includes all jurisdictions that fall within the borders of Maricopa County. Apache Junction is also included as it straddles the county border.

10. Date – Time – Location of Next Meeting

The next Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 24, 2006. It will be held at Burton Barr Central Library located at 1221 North Central Avenue in Phoenix, Arizona.

11. Call to the Public

Paul Wilson would like to see a membership and contact list developed for the Operational and Technical Workgroups, as well as a definition of goals and action plans for both the short-term and long-term for each workgroup. Curt Knight asked the co-chairs to initiate communication with the workgroups.

Paul Wilson encouraged audience participants to serve as members on the workgroups to achieve a good cross-section of representation on each. Kevin Rogers stated his intent to hold at least one workgroup meeting prior to the holidays.

Steve Powles of DPS noted the Arizona Inter-Agency Radio System State Plan dated April 1999 plan discusses future use of particular frequencies while the document indicating VHF mobile – portable standards that was tabled discusses planned use.

12. Adjournment

Mark Venuti made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:25 am. John Maldonado seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.